AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-13, 15-25 and 27-29 are pending in the subject application. Each of claims 1, 12, and 13 has been amended herein. This Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for prioritizing user application preferences based on user input data, the method comprising:

recognizing, at a computing device of a user, user input data relevant to a first application as a user choice setting associated with the first application, wherein the user choice setting determines at least one property of execution of at least one event of the first application;

securing, at the computing device of the user, the user choice setting as a protected value using an access control indicator, wherein the access control indicator prohibits the second application from modifying the user choice setting associated with the first application without authorization from [[a]]the user;

receiving, at the computing device of the user, a request from the second application to modify the user choice setting associated with the first application;

in response to receiving the request from the second application to modify the user choice setting associated with the first application, generating an approval user interface on the computing device of the user, the approval user interface requesting authorization from the user to modify the user choice setting associated

with the first application to be consistent with the modification request received from the second application;

receiving, at the computing device of the user, input from the user approving the modification of the user choice setting associated with the first application to be consistent with the modification request received from the second application;

modifying, at the computing device of the user, the access control indicator to permit modification of the user choice setting associated with the first application to be consistent with the modification request received from the second application;

modifying, at the computing device of the user, the user choice setting in accordance with the received user input; and

restoring, at the computing device of the user, the access control indicator to prohibit further modification by the second application of the user choice setting associated with the first application[[,]]

~~wherein each step is executed on a computing device of the user~~.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1,

wherein the computing device of the user has an operating system with a registry,

wherein the protected value is a registry key stored in the registry,

wherein the access control indicator is an access control list (ACL) that has been initialized to prevent writing to the protected value,

and wherein modifying the access control indicator includes modifying the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 2, wherein the operating system also includes a security subsystem, and wherein modifying the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value includes providing to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 3, wherein modifying the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value includes providing to the user ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures, and wherein ownership of the registry key automatically provides to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 4, wherein providing to the user ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures includes temporarily providing to the ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 3,

wherein securing the user choice setting as a protected value using the access control indicator includes securing the user choice setting as a protected value using the access control indicator to prohibit the second application from writing to the protected value,

and wherein modifying the access control indicator to permit modification of the user choice setting associated with the first application to be consistent with

the modification request received from the second application includes modifying the access control indicator to permit the second application to write to the protected value.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 4, wherein restoring the access control indicator to prohibit further modification by the second application includes returning ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures to the operating system.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

displaying, in association with the approval user interface, the user choice setting along with options for modifying the user choice setting,

wherein receiving input from the user approving the modification of the user choice setting comprises receiving input from the user in accordance with at least one of the displayed options.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising generating a change notification when the user choice setting has been modified, the change notification identifying the second application and the user choice setting before and after the modification.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the user choice setting includes at least one of a user preference relating to a file association, an autoplay setting, contents of a start menu, a registered client setting, a protocol handler, a MIME type handler, a task association, a Web browser home page, a reset Web page setting, and a sidebar setting.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 10, wherein the user choice setting includes the registered client setting, and wherein the registered client setting includes at least one of a Web browser, e-mail, media player, instant messaging, and virtual machine for Java setting.

12. (Currently Amended) A system for storing user choice settings in a data repository to prevent undesired modifications to the user choice settings, the system comprising:

a registry for storing a user choice setting associated with a first application as a protected value in a registry key, wherein the user choice setting determines at least one property of execution of at least one event of the first application, and wherein the user choice setting comprises at least one of a user preference relating to a file association, an autoplay setting, contents of a start menu, a registered client, a protocol handler, a MIME type handler, a task association, an internet explorer home page, a reset Web page setting, and a sidebar setting;

an access control list (ACL) to secure the registry key, wherein the ACL prevents the first application or another application from modifying the user choice setting associated with the first application; and

an approval user interface to control modifications to the user choice setting, wherein the approval user interface is generated on a computing device of the user in response to receiving a request from the first application or another application to modify the user choice setting, and wherein the approval user

interface, upon obtaining approval to modify the user choice setting, modifies the ACL to permit writing to the protected value in the registry key.

13. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 12:

~~wherein the approval user interface, upon obtaining approval to modify the user choice setting, modifies the ACL to permit writing to the protected value in the registry key,~~

wherein the approval user interface writes to the protected value the modified user choice setting,

wherein the approval user interface restores the ACL to prevent writing to the protected value in the registry key after writing the modified user choice setting,

and wherein the approval user interface notifies the user whenever the approval user interface writes to the protected value, including notifying the user of a content of the protected value before and after the approval user interface writes to the protected value and an identity of the application that requested the modification.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 13, wherein the user choice setting comprises a registered client setting, and wherein the registered client setting includes at least one of a Web browser, e-mail, media player, instant messaging, and virtual machine for Java setting.

16. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 12, wherein the computing device of the user includes an operating system having a security subsystem, and wherein the security subsystem modifies the ACL to permit the first application or another application to modify the user choice setting associated with the first application upon receiving user approval of the request to modify the user choice setting.

17. (Previously Presented) The system, of Claim 12, wherein the security subsystem modifies the ACL to permit writing to the protected value in the registry key by providing to the user ownership of the registry key, wherein ownership of the registry key automatically provides to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

18. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 12, wherein the security subsystem modifies the ACL to permit writing to the protected value in the registry key includes by providing to the user temporary ownership of the registry key, wherein temporary ownership of the registry key automatically provides to the user rights to temporarily modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

19. (Previously Presented) A computer-accessible medium having components for performing a method of safely modifying user application preferences for when and how an application is to operate on a computer of a user, the method comprising:

recognizing user input data relevant to the application as a user choice setting, wherein the user choice setting determines at least one property of execution of at least one event of the application;

securing the user choice setting as a protected value using an access control indicator, wherein the access control indicator prohibits the application from modifying the user choice setting;

receiving a request from the application to modify the user choice setting;

in response to the request from the application to modify the user choice setting, generating an approval user interface requesting authorization from the user to modify the user choice setting in accordance with the modification request received;

receiving input from the user approving modification of the user choice setting associated with the application to be consistent with the request received from the application;

modifying the access control indicator to permit modification of the user choice setting associated with the application to be consistent with the modification request received;

modifying the user choice setting in accordance with the received user input;

restoring the access control indicator to prohibit further modification of the user choice setting; and

generating a change notification to the user once the user choice setting has been modified.

20. (Previously Presented) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 19, wherein the computer of the user includes an operating system having a registry,

wherein the protected value is a registry key stored in the registry,

wherein the access control indicator an access control list (ACL) that has been initialized to prevent writing to the protected value,

and wherein modifying the access control indicator includes modifying the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value.

21. (Previously Presented) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 20, wherein the operating system also includes a security subsystem, and wherein modifying the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value includes providing to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

22. (Previously Presented) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 21, wherein modifying the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value includes providing to the user ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures, and wherein ownership of the registry key automatically provides to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

23. (Previously Presented) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 20, wherein providing to the user ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures includes temporarily providing to the user ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures.

24. (Previously Presented) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 21, wherein modifying the access control indicator to permit modification of the user choice setting associated with the application to be consistent with the modification request received includes requiring user to modify the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

25. (Previously Presented) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 24, wherein restoring the access control indicator to prohibit further modification of the user choice setting includes returning ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures to the operating system.

26. (Canceled).

27. (Previously Presented) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 19, wherein the change notification identifies the application and the contents of the user choice setting before and after the modification.

28. (Previously Presented) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 19, wherein the user choice setting includes at least one of a user preference relating to a file association, an autoplay setting, contents of a start menu, a registered client setting, a protocol handler, a MME type handler, a task association, a Web browser home page, a reset Web page setting, and a sidebar setting.

29. (Previously Presented) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 28, wherein the user choice setting includes the registered client setting, and wherein the registered client setting includes at least one of a Web browser, e-mail, media player, instant messaging, and virtual machine for Java setting.